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HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & COMPANY, Boston and New York.

HERMIONE

AND OTHER POEMS

BY

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL



BOSTON AND NEW YORK HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY (The Riverside Press, Cambridge 1899 COPYRIGHT, 1899, BY HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND CO. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

NOTE



N 1887 the publishers of this volume issued a small collection of Mr. Sill's poems under the title

Poems by Edward Rowland Sill. In the prefatory note a brief account was given of the poet and his productions, and attention was drawn to the scattering of his poems during his lifetime in many forms of print and even with a variety of signatures. The volume then gathered was purposely small and gave a hint only of the activity of Mr. Sill's poetic nature.

Two years later a second collection was made, and published under the title *The Hermitage, and Later Poems*, with a tributary lyric by Mr. Aldrich. These two volumes have won many readers, and the strong personal interest in Mr. Sill thus created has led to an urgent demand for a still further collection of his scattered poems. After a lapse of ten years, therefore, the publishers present a third and final volume, in which they have endeavored to gather from print and manuscript such verses as may satisfy a demand created by reading an author who gave freely, but after all would have set light store upon many of his gifts. Thus the three volumes really contain a selection rather than a collection of Mr. Sill's poetical writings.

March, 1899.

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HERMIONE

I

THE LOST MAGIC

HITE in her snowy stone, and cold,

With azure veins and shining arms,

Pygmalion doth his bride behold,

Rapt on her pure and sculptured charms.

Ah! in those half-divine old days Love still worked miracles for men; The gods taught lovers wondrous ways To breathe a soul in marble then.

He gazed, he yearned, he vowed, he wept. Some secret witchery touched her breast;

And, laughing April tears, she stepped Down to his arms and lay at rest.

Hermione

Dear artist of the storied land ! I too have loved a heart of stone. What was thy charm of voice or hand, Thy secret spell, Pygmalion ?

II

INFLUENCES

IF quiet autumn mornings would not come, With golden light, and haze, and harvest wain,

And spices of the dead leaves at my feet; If sunsets would not burn through cloud, and stain

With fading rosy flush the dusky dome;

If the young mother would not croon that sweet

Old sleep-song, like the robin's in the rain;

If the great cloud-ships would not float and drift

Across such blue all the calm afternoon ;

If night were not so hushed; or if the moon

Might pause forever by that pearly rift,

The Dead Letter

Nor fill the garden with its flood again; If the world were not what it still must be, Then might I live forgetting love and thee.

III

THE DEAD LETTER

THE letter came at last. I carried it

- To the deep woods unopened. All the trees
- Were hushed, as if they waited what was writ,

And feared for me. Silent they let me sit

- Among them; leaning breathless while I read,
- And bending down above me where they stood.
- A long way off I heard the delicate tread Of the light-footed loiterer, the breeze,
- Come walking toward me in the leafy wood.
- I burned the page that brought me love and woe.

- At first it writhed to feel the spires of flame,
- Then lay quite still; and o'er each word there came
- Its white ghost of the ash, and burning slow
- Each said: "You cannot kill the spirit; know
- That we shall haunt you, even till heart and brain

Lie as we lie in ashes - all in vain."

IV

THE SONG IN THE NIGHT

IN the deep night a little birdWakens, or dreams he is awake :Cheerily clear one phrase is heard,And you almost feel the morning break.

In the deep dark of loss and wrong, One face like a lovely dawn will thrill, And all night long at my heart a song Suddenly stirs and then is still.

REPROOF IN LOVE



ECAUSE we are shut out from light,

Each of the other's look and smile;

Because the arms' and lips' delight Are past and dead, a weary while;

Because the dawn, that joy has brought, Brings now but certainty of pain, Nothing for you and me has bought The right to live our lives in vain.

Take not away the only lure That leads me on my lonely way, To know you noble, sweet, and pure, Great in least service, day by day.

5

TEMPTED



ES, I know what you say : Since it cannot be soul to soul, Be it flesh to flesh, as it may ; But is Earth the whole ?

Shall a man betray the Past For all Earth gives ? "But the Past is dead ?" At last, It is all that lives.

Which were the nobler goal — To snatch at the moment's bliss, Or to swear I will keep my soul Clean for her kiss?

6

ALONE



TILL earth turns and pulses stir, And each day hath its deed ; But if I be dead to her, What is the life I lead?

Cares the cuckoo for the wood, When the red leaves are down? Stays the robin near the brood, When they are fledged and flown?

Yea, we live; the common air To both its bounty brings. Mockery! Can the absent share The half-forgotten things?

Barren comfort fancy doles To him that truly sees; Sullen Earth can sever souls, Far as the Pleiades.

Alone

Take thy toys, step-mother Earth, — Take force of limb and brain; All thy gifts are little worth, Till her I find again.

Grass may spring and buds may stir, — Why should mine eyes take heed? For if I be dead to her, Then am I dead indeed.

TO A MAID DEMURE



FTEN when the night is come, With its quiet group at home, While they broider, knit, or sew,

Read, or chat in voices low, Suddenly you lift your eyes With an earnest look, and wise; But I cannot read their lore, — Tell me less, or tell me more.

Like a picture in a book, Pure and peaceful is your look, Quietly you walk your ways ; Steadfast duty fills the days. Neither tears nor fierce delights, Feverish days nor tossing nights, Any troublous dreams confess, — Tell me more, or tell me less.

Swift the weeks are on the wing; Years are brief, and love a thing

To a Maid Demure

Blooming, fading, like a flower; Wake and seize the little hour. Give me welcome, or farewell; Quick! I wait! And who can tell What to-morrow may befall, — Love me more, or not at all.

THE COUP DE GRACE



F I were very sure

That all was over betwixt you and me —

That, while this endless absence I endure

With but one mood, one dream, one misery

Of waiting, you were happier to be free, --

Then I might find again

In cloud and stream and all the winds that blow,

Yea, even in the faces of my fellowmen,

The old companionship; and I might know Once more the pulse of action, ere I go.

But now I cannot rest, While this one pleading, querulous tone without

12 The Coup de Grace

Breaks in and mars the music in my breast.

I open the closed door — lo! all about, What seem your lingering footprints; then I doubt.

Waken me from this sleep ! Strike fearless, let the naked truth-edge gleam !

For while the beautiful old past I keep, I am a phantom, and all mortals seem But phantoms, and my life fades as a dream.

THE WORLD RUNS ROUND¹



HE world runs round, And the world runs well; And at heaven's bound,

Weaving what the hours shall tell Of the future way, Sit the great Norns, sisters gray. Now a thread of doom and hate, Now a skein of life and love, — Whether hearing shriek or psalm, Hearts that curse or pray, Most composed and very calm Is their weaving, soon and late.

One man's noisy years go by, Rich to the crowd's shallow eye, Full of big and empty sound,

¹ For the Anniversary of the Overland Magazine, San Francisco, 1884.

13

Brandished gesture, voice profound, Blustering benevolence, Thin in deeds, and poor in pence. Out of it all, so loud and long, What one thread that's clean and strong To weave the coming good, Can the great Norns find ? But where some poor child stood, And shrank, and wept its faultiness, Out of that little life so blind The great web takes a golden strand That shall shine and that shall stand The whole wide world to bless.

One man walks in silk : Honey and milk Flow thro' his days. Corn loads his wains, He hath all men's praise, He sees his heart's desire. In all his veins What can the sorrowful Norns Find of heroic fire ?

Another finds his ways All blocked and barred. Lonely, he grapples hard, Sets teeth and bleeds. Then the glad Norns Know he succeeds, With victory wrought Greater than that he sought.

When will the world believe Force is for him that is met and fought: Storm hath no song till the pine resists; Lightning no flame when it runs as it lists; So do the wise Norns weave. The world runs round, And the world runs well: It needs no prophet, when evil is found, Good to foretell.

Many the voices Ruffling the air : This one rejoices, That in despair

Past the sky-bars Climbs to the stars.

One voice is heard By the ocean's shore, Speaking a word Quiet and sane, Amid the human rush and roar Like a robin's song in the rain. The red gold of the sun Seems to stream in power Already from behind the shower When that song's begun.

It doth not insist, or claim ; You may hear, or go : It clamors not for gain or fame, Tranquilly and slow It speaketh unafraid, Calls the spade, spade, With the large sense mature Of him that hath both sat, and roved, And with a solemn undercurrent pure, As his that now hath lived and loved. Brightened with glimpse and gleam Of mother-wit ----There is more salt in it, More germ and sperm Of the great things to be, Than louder notes men speak and sing. It is a voice of Spring, Clear and firm. Tones prophetic in it flow, Steady and strong, Vet soft and low-An excellent thing in song. "I can wait," saith merry Spring, If the rain runneth, and the wind hummeth. And the mount at morn be hoar with snow, In the frost the violet dozes, Wind and rain bear breath of roses, And the great summer cometh Wherein all things shall gayly bloom and grow.

18

Long may the voice be found, Potent its spell, While the world runs round, And the world runs well.

ONE TOUCH OF NATURE



RUEL and wild the battle: Great horses plunged and reared, And through dust - cloud and smoke-cloud,

Blood-red with sunset's angry flush, You heard the gun-shots rattle, And, 'mid hoof-tramp and rush, The shrieks of women speared.

For it was Russ and Turkoman, — No quarter asked or given ; A whirl of frenzied hate and death Across the desert driven. Look ! the half-naked horde gives way, Fleeing frantic without breath, Or hope, or will; and on behind The troopers storm, in blood-thirst blind, While, like a dreadful fountain-play,

One Touch of Nature

20

The swords flash up, and fall, and slay — Wives, grandsires, baby brows and gray, Groan after groan, yell upon yell — Are men but fiends, and is earth hell?

Nay, for out of the flight and fear Spurs a Russian cuirassier ; In his arms a child he bears. Her little foot bleeds ; stern she stares Back at the ruin of her race. The small hurt creature sheds no tear, Nor utters cry ; but clinging still To this one arm that does not kill, She stares back with her baby face.

Apart, fenced round with ruined gear, The hurrying horseman finds a space, Where, with face crouched upon her knee, A woman cowers. You see him stoop And reach the child down tenderly, Then dash away to join his troop.

How came one pulse of pity there — One heart that would not slay, but save —

One Touch of Nature

In all that Christ-forgotten sight? Was there, far north by Neva's wave, Some Russian girl in sleep-robes white, Making her peaceful evening prayer, That Heaven's great mercy 'neath its care Would keep and cover him to-night?

THE CRICKETS IN THE FIELDS



NE, or a thousand voices? — filling noon

With such an undersong and drowsy chant

As sings in ears that waken from a swoon, And know not yet which world such murmurs haunt:

Single, then double beats, reiterant ; Far off and near; one ceaseless, changeless tune.

If bird or breeze awake the dreamy will We lose the song, as it had never been;Then suddenly we find 't is singing still And had not ceased. So, friend of mine, within My thoughts one underthought, beneath the din

Of life, doth every quiet moment fill.

The Crickets in the Fields 23

Thy voice is far, thy face is hid from me, But day and night are full of dreams of thee.

SUNDAY



OT a dread cavern, hoar with damp and mould,

Where I must creep, and in the dark and cold,

Offer some awful incense at a shrine That hath no more divine

Than that 't is far from life, and stern, and old;

But a bright hill-top in the breezy air,

Full of the morning freshness high and clear,

Where I may climb and drink the pure, new day,

And see where winds away

The path that God would send me, shining fair.

24

ON SECOND THOUGHT



HE end 's so near, It is all one What track I steer, What work 's begun. It is all one If *nothing* 's done, The end 's so near !

The end 's so near, It is all one What track thou steer, What work 's begun — Some deed, some plan, As thou 'rt a man ! The end 's so near ! 25

HIS LOST DAY



ROWING old, and looking back Wistfully along his track, I have heard him try to tell,

With a smile a little grim, Why a world he loved so well Had no larger fruit of him:—

'T was one summer, when the time Loiterëd like drowsy rhyme, Sauntering on his idle way Somehow he had lost a day. Whether 't was the daisies meek, Keeping Sabbath all the week, Birds without one work-day even, Or the little pagan bees, Busy all the sunny seven, — Whether sleep at afternoon, Or much rising with the moon, Couching with the morning star,

His Lost Day

Or enchantments like to these, Had confused his calendar, —

"It is Saturday," men said. "Nay, 't is Friday," obstinate Clung the notion in his head. Had the cloudy sisters three In their weaving of his fate, Dozed, and dropped a stitch astray?

"'T was the losing of that day Cost my fortune," he would say. "On that day I should have writ Screeds of wisdom and of wit; Should have sung the missing song, Wonderful, and sweet, and strong; Might have solved men's doubt and dream With some waiting truth supreme. If another thing there be That a groping hand may miss In a twilight world like this, Those lost hours its grace and glee Surely would have brought to me."

FERTILITY



LEAR water on smooth rock Could give no foot-hold for a single flower,

Or slenderest shaft of grain:

The stone must crumble under storm and rain —

The forests crash beneath the whirlwind's power —

And broken boughs from many a tempestshock,

And fallen leaves of many a wintry hour, Must mingle in the mould,

Before the harvest whitens on the plain, Bearing an hundred-fold.

Patience, O weary heart!

Let all thy sparkling hours depart,

And all thy hopes be withered with the frost.

And every effort tempest-tost ----

Fertility

So, when all life's green leaves

Are fallen, and mouldered underneath the sod,

Thou shalt go not too lightly to thy God, But heavy with full sheaves.

THE MYSTERY



- NEVER know why 't is I love thee so:
 - I do not think 't is that thine eyes for me

Grow bright as sudden sunshine on the sea;

Nor for thy rose-leaf lips, or breast of snow,

Or voice like quiet waters where they flow.

So why I love thee well I cannot tell: Only it is that when thou speak'st to me 'T is thy voice speaks, and when thy face I see It is thy face I see ; and it befell Thou wert, and I was, and I love thee well.

30

THE LOST BIRD



HAT cared she for the free hearts? She would comfort The prisoned one :

What recked I of the wanton other singers ? She sang for me alone —

Was all my own, my own !

But when they loaded me with heavier fetters, And chained I lay, How could she know I longed to reach her window ? Athirst the livelong day, At eve she fled away.

Still stands her cage wide open at the casement, In sun and rain,

The Lost Bird

Though years have gone, and rust has thickly gathered, — My watching all in vain ; She will not come again.

Against its wires I strum with idle fingers

From morn to noon;

- I swing the door with loitering touch, and listen To hear that old-time tune, Sweet as the soul of June.
- My bird, my silver voice that cheered my prison,

Hushed, lost to me:

And still I wait for death, in chains, forsaken,

> (Soon may the summons be !) But she is free.

> > - " Is free ? "

Nay, in the palace porches caught and hanging,

32

The Lost Bird

Who says 't is gay — The song the false prince hears? who says her singing, From day to summer day, Grieves not her heart away? But when my dream comes true in that last sleeping, And death makes free, Against the blue shall snowy wings come sweeping, My bird flown back to me,

Mine for eternity!

WARNING



E true to me! For there will dawn a day

When thou wilt find the faith that now I see,

Bow at the shrines where I must bend the knee,

Knowing the great from small. Then lest thou say,

"Ah me, that I had never flung away

- His love who would have stood so close to me
- Where now I walk alone "-lest there should be
- Such vain regret, Love, oh be true ! But nay,
- Not true to me: true to thine own high quest

Of truth ; the aspiration in thy breast,

Noble and blind, that pushes by my hand,

- And will not lean, yet cannot surely stand;
- True to thine own pure heart, as mine to thee
- Beats true. So shalt thou best be true to me.

SUMMER AFTERNOON



AR in hollow mountain cañons Brood with purple-folded pinions, Flocks of drowsy distance-colors

on their nests;

And the bare round slopes for forests Have cloud-shadows, floating forests, On their breasts.

Winds are wakening and dying, Questions low with low replying, Through the oak a hushed and trembling whisper goes : Faint and rich the air with odors, Hyacinth and spicy odors Of the rose.

Even the flowerless acacia

Is one flower — such slender stature, With its latticed leaves a-tremble in the sun:

Summer Afternoon

They have shower-drops for blossoms, Quivering globes of diamond-blossoms, Every one.

In the blue of heaven holy Clouds go floating, floating slowly, Pure in snowy robe and sunny silver crown; And they seem like gentle angels — Leisure-full and loitering angels, Looking down.

Half the birds are wild with singing, And the rest with rhythmic winging Sing in melody of motion to the sight; Every little sparrow twitters, Cheerily chirps, and cheeps, and twitters

His delight.

Sad at heart amid the splendor, Dull to all the radiance tender, What can I for such a world give back again?

Summer Afternoon

38

Could I only hint the beauty — Some least shadow of the beauty, Unto men!

SUMMER NIGHT



ROM the warm garden in the summer night

- All faintest odors came : the tuberose white
- Glimmered in its dark bed, and many a bloom
- Invisibly breathed spices on the gloom.
- It stirred a trouble in the man's dull heart,
- A vexing, mute unrest: "Now what thou art,
- Tell me!" he said in anger. Something sighed,
- "I am the poor ghost of a ghost that died
- In years gone by." And he recalled of old
- A passion dead long dead, even then that came
- And haunted many a night like this, the same

40 Summer Night

- In their dim hush above the fragrant mould
- And glimmering flowers, and troubled all his breast.
- "Rest!" then he cried ; "perturbëd spirit, rest!"

A CALIFORNIAN'S DREAMS



THUNDER - STORM of the olden days !

The red sun sinks in a sleepy haze;

The sultry twilight, close and still, Muffles the cricket's drowsy trill. Then a round-topped cloud rolls up the west,

Black to its smouldering, ashy crest, And the chariot of the storm you hear, With its jarring axle rumbling near; Till the blue is hid, and here and there The sudden, blinding lightnings glare. Scattering now the big drops fall, Till the rushing rain in a silver wall Blurs the line of the bending elms, Then blots them out and the landscape whelms.

A flash — a clap, and a rumbling peal: The broken clouds the blue reveal;

42 A Californian's Dreams

The last bright drops fall far away, And the wind, that had slept for heat all day,

With a long-drawn sigh awakes again And drinks the cool of the blessed rain.

November ! night, and a sleety storm : Close are the ruddy curtains, warm And rich in the glow of the roaring grate. It may howl outside like a baffled fate, And rage on the roof, and lash the pane With its fierce and impotent wrath in vain.

Sitting within at our royal ease We sing to the chime of the ivory keys, And feast our hearts from script and score

With the wealth of the mellow hearts of yore.

A winter's night on a world of snow ! Not a sound above, not a stir below : The moon hangs white in the icy air, And the shadows are motionless everywhere.

A Californian's Dreams 43

Is this the planet that we know — This silent floor of the ghostly snow? Or is this the moon, so still and dead, And yonder orb far overhead, With its silver map of plain and sea, Is that the earth where we used to be? Shall we float away in the frosty blue To that living, summer world we knew, With its full, hot heart-beats as of old, Or be frozen phantoms of the cold?

A river of ice, all blue and glare, Under a star-shine dim and rare. The sheeny sheet in the sparkling light Is ribbed with slender wisps of white — Crinkles of snow, that the flying steel Lightly crunches with ringing heel. Swinging swift as the swallows skim, You round the shadowy river's rim : Falling somewhere out of the sky Hollow and weird is the owlet's cry; The gloaming woods seem phantom hosts, And the bushes cower in the snow like ghosts.

44 A Californian's Dreams

Till the tinkling feet that with you glide Skate closer and closer to your side, And something steals from a furry muff, And you clasp it and cannot wonder enough

That a little palm so soft and fair Could keep so warm in the frosty air.

'T is thus we dream in our tranquil clime, Rooted still in the olden time; Longing for all those glooms and gleams Of passionate Nature's mad extremes. Or was it only our hearts, that swelled With the youth and life and love they held?

FULFILLMENT



LL the skies had gloomed in gray, Many a week, day after day. Nothing came the blank to fill,

Nothing stirred the stagnant will. Winds were raw; buds would not swell: Some malign and sullen spell Soured the currents of the year, And filled the heart with lurking fear.

In his room he moped and glowered, Where the leaden daylight lowered ; Drummed the casement, turned his book, Hating nature's hostile look.

Suddenly there came a day When he flung his gloom away. Something hinted help was near : Winds were fresh and sky was clear ; Light he stepped, and firmly planned, — Some good news was close at hand

Fulfillment

Truly: for when day was done, He was lying all alone, Fretted pulse had ceased to beat, Very still were hands and feet, And the robins through the long Twilight sang his slumber song.

THE SINGER

ILLY bird ! When his mate is near, Not a note of singing shall you

hear. Take his little love away, Half the livelong day Will his tune be heard — Silly bird !

Sunny days Silent basks he in the light, Little sybarite ! But when all the room Darkens in the gloom, And the rain Pours and pours along the pane, He is bent (Ah, the small inconsequent !) On defying all the weather ;

The Singer

Rain and cloud and storm together Naught to him, Singing like the seraphim.

So we know a poet's ways : Sunny days, Silent he In his fine serenity ; But if winds are loud, He will pipe beneath the cloud ; And if one is far away, Sings his heart out, as to say, — "It may be She will hear and come to me."

THE THINGS THAT WILL NOT DIE

HAT am I glad will stay when I have passed From this dear valley of the world, and stand On yon snow-glimmering peaks, and lingering cast From that dim land A backward look, and haply stretch my hand, Regretful, now the wish comes true at last? Sweet strains of music I am glad will be Still wandering down the wind, for men will hear And think themselves from all their care set free. And heaven near

50 The Things that will not Die

When summer stars burn very still and clear,

And waves of sound are swelling like the sea.

- And it is good to know that overhead Blue skies will brighten, and the sun will shine,
- And flowers be sweet in many a garden bed,

And all divine,

- (For are they not, O Father, thoughts of thine ?)
- Earth's warmth and fragrance shall on men be shed.
- And I am glad that Night will always come,

Hushing all sounds, even the soft-voiced birds,

- Putting away all light from her deep dome, Until are heard
 - In the wide starlight's stillness, unknown words,

The Things that will not Die 51 That make the heart ache till it find its home.

And I am glad that neither golden sky, Nor violet lights that linger on the hill, Nor ocean's wistful blue shall satisfy, But they shall fill With wild unrest and endless longing still, The soul whose hope beyond them all

must lie.

And I rejoice that love shall never seem So perfect as it ever was to be, But endlessly that inner haunting dream Each heart shall see Hinted in every dawn's fresh purity, Hopelessly shadowed in each sunset's gleam.

And though warm mouths will kiss and hands will cling, And thought by silent thought be understood,

52 The Things that will not Die

- I do rejoice that the next hour will bring That far off mood,
 - That drives one like a lonely child to God,

Who only sees and measures everything.

- And it is well that when these feet have pressed
- The outward path from earth, 't will not seem sad
- To them that stay; but they who love me best

Will be most glad

That such a long unquiet now has had, At last, a gift of perfect peace and rest.

THE SECRET



TIDE of sun and song in beauty broke

Against a bitter heart, where no voice woke

Till thus it spoke : ---

What was it, in the old time that I know, That made the world with inner beauty glow, Now a vain show?

- Still dance the shadows on the grass at play,
- Still move the clouds like great, calm thoughts away,

Nor haste, nor stay.

But I have lost that breath within the gale,

54 The Secret

That light to which the daylight was a veil, The star-shine pale.

Still all the summer with its songs is filled,

But that delicious undertone they held — Why is it stilled ?

Then I took heart that I would find again The voices that had long in silence lain, Nor live in vain.

I stood at noonday in the hollow wind, Listened at midnight, straining heart and mind If I might find !

But all in vain I sought, at eve and morn, On sunny seas, in dripping woods forlorn, Till tired and worn,

One day I left my solitary tent And down into the world's bright garden went, On labor bent.

The Secret

The dew stars and the buds about my feet Began their old bright message to repeat, In odors sweet;

And as I worked at weed and root in glee,

Now humming and now whistling cheerily, It came to me, —

The secret of the glory that was fled Shone like a sweep of sun all overhead, And something said, —

There was no care if thou wert blest or not:

The beauty and the wonder all thy thought, —

Thyself forgot."

[&]quot;The blessing came because it was not sought;

LOST LOVE



URY it, and sift Dust upon its light, — Death must not be left, To offend the sight.

Cover the old love — Weep not on the mound — Grass shall grow above, Lilies spring around.

Can we fight the law, Can our natures change — Half-way through withdraw — Other lives exchange?

You and I must do As the world has done, There is nothing new Underneath the sun.

Lost Love

Fill the grave up full — Put the dead love by — Not that men are dull, Not that women lie, —

But 't is well and right — Safest, you will find — That the Out of Sight Should be Out of Mind.

APPRECIATED



H, could I but be understood !" (I prayed the powers above)
"Could but some spirit, bright and good,

and good,

Know me and, knowing, love !"

One summer's day there came to pass — A maid ; and it befell She spied and knew me : yea, alas ! She knew me all too well.

Gray were the eyes of Rosamund, And I could see them see Through and through me, and beyond, And care no more for me.

58

MOODS



AWN has blossomed: the sun is nigh:

Pearl and rose in the wimpled sky,

Rose and pearl on a brightening blue: (She is true, and she is true !)

The noonday lies all warm and still And calm, and over sleeping hill And wheatfields falls a dreamy hue: (If she be true — if she be true !)

The patient evening comes, most sad and fair: Veiled are the stars: the dim and quiet air Breathes bitter scents of hidden myrrh and rue: (If she were true — if she were only true!)

SPACE



LACK, frost-cold distance, sparsely honey-combed

With hollow shells of glimmering golden light;

Mere amber bubbles floating through the night,

Lit by one centred sparkle, azure-domed, With circling motes where life hath lodged and roamed.

60

UNTIMELY THOUGHT



LOOKED across the lawn one summer's day,

Deep shadowed, dreaming in the drowsy light,

And thought, what if this afternoon, so bright

And still, should end it ? - as it may.

Blue dome, and flocks of fleece that slowly pass

- Before the pale old moon, the while she keeps
- Her sleepy watch, and ancient pear that sweeps

Its low, fruit-laden skirts along the grass.

What if I had to say to all of these, "So this is the last time" — suddenly there

62 Untimely Thought

My love came loitering under the great trees;

And now the thought I could no longer bear: Startled I flung it from me, as one flings All sharply from the hand a bee that

stings.

THE LIFE NATURAL



VERHEAD the leaf-song, on the upland slope;

Over that the azure, clean from base to cope;

Belle the mare beside me, drowsy from her lope.

Goldy-green the wheat-field, like a fluted wall

In the pleasant wind, with waves that rise and fall,

"Moving all together," if it "move at all."

Shakspere in my pocket, lest I feel alone, Lest the brooding landscape take a sombre tone; Good to have a poet to fall back upon !

But the vivid beauty makes the book absurd:

64 The Life Natural

What beside the real world is the written word?

Keep the page till winter, when no thrush is heard !

Why read Hamlet here ? — what 's Hecuba to me ?

Let me read the grain-field; let me read • the tree;

Let me read mine own heart, deep as I can see.

THE ORACLE



OWN in its crystal hollow Gleams the ebon well of ink: In the deepest drop lies lurking

The thought all men shall think.

Fair on the waiting tablet Lies the empty paper's space : Out of its snow shall flush a word Like an angel's earnest face.

Who in those depths shall cast his line For the gnome that hugs that thought ? Who from the snowy field shall charm That flower of truth untaught ?

Not in the lore of the ancients, Not in the yesterday : On the lips of the living moments The gods their message lay.

The Oracle

Somewhere near it is waiting,

Like a night-wind wandering free, Seeking a mouth to speak through, — Whose shall the message be?

It may steal forth like a flute note, It may be suddenly hurled In blare upon blare of a trumpet blast, To startle and stir the world.

Hark! but just on the other side Some thinnest wall of dreams, Murmurs a whispered music, And softest rose-light gleams.

Listen, and watch, and tell the world What it almost dies to know : Or wait — and the wise old world will say, "I knew it long ago."

66

FORCE



HE stars know a secret They do not tell; And morn brings a message Hidden well.

There's a blush on the apple, A tint on the wing, And the bright wind whistles, And the pulses sting.

Perish dark memories ! There 's light ahead ; This world 's for the living ; Not for the dead.

In the shining city, On the loud pave, The life-tide is running Like a leaping wave. 67

Force

How the stream quickens, As noon draws near, No room for loiterers, No time for fear.

Out on the farm lands Earth smiles as well ; Gold-crusted grain-fields, With sweet, warm smell ;

Whir of the reaper, Like a giant bee; Like a Titan cricket, Thrilling with glee.

On mart and meadow, Pavement or plain; On azure mountain, Or azure main —

Heaven bends in blessing; Lost is but won; Goes the good rain-cloud, Comes the good sun!

Force

Only babes whimper, And sick men wail, And faint hearts and feeble hearts, And weaklings fail.

Down the great currents Let the boat swing; There was never winter But brought the spring.

69

SUNDOWN



SEA of splendor in the West, Purple, and pearl, and gold, With milk-white ships of cloud, whose sails

Slowly the winds unfold.

Brown cirrus-bars, like ribbed beach-sand, Cross the blue upper dome ; And nearer flecks of feathery white Blow over them like foam.

But when that transient glory dies Into the twilight gray, And leaves me on the beach alone Beside the glimmering bay;

And when I know that, late or soon, Love's glory finds a grave, And hearts that danced like dancing foam Break like the breaking wave;

Sundown

A little dreary, homeless thought Creeps sadly over me, Like the shadow of a lonely cloud Moving along the sea.

NIGHT AND PEACE



IGHT in the woods, — night: Peace, peace on the plain. The last red sunset beam

Belts the tall beech with gold; The quiet kine are in the fold, And stilly flows the stream. Soon shall we see the stars again, For one more day down to its rest has lain, And all its cares have taken flight, And all its doubt and pain. Night in the woods, — night: Peace, peace on the plain.

72

THE SINGER'S CONFESSION



NCE he cried to all the hills and waters

And the tossing grain and tufted grasses :

"Take my message — tell it to my brothers!

Stricken mute I cannot speak my message.

When the evening wind comes back from ocean,

Singing surf-songs, to Earth's fragrant bosom,

And the beautiful young human creatures Gather at the mother feet of Nature, Gazing with their pure and wistful faces,

Tell the old heroic human story.

When they weary of the wheels of science, Grinding, jangling their harsh dissonances, —

74 The Singer's Confession

Stones and bones and alkalis and atoms, —

Sing to them of human hope and passion; And the soul divine, whose incarnation,

- Born of love alas ! my message stumbles,
- Faints on faltering lips : Oh, speak it for me ! "

Then a hush fell; and around about him Suddenly he felt the mighty shadow Of the hills, like grave and silent pity; And, as one who sees without regarding, The wide wind went over him and left him,

- And the brook, repeating low, "His message!"
- Babbled, as it fled, a quiet laughter.

What was he, that he had touched their message —

Theirs, who had been chanting it forever: With whose organ-tones the human spirit Had eternally been overflowing! The Singer's Confession75Then, with shame that stung in cheek and
forehead,1Slow he crept away.
And now he listens,Mute and still, to hear them tell their
message —All the holy hills and sacred waters ;When the sea-wind swings its evening
censer,Till the misty incense hides the altar
And the long-robed shadows, lowly kneel-
ing.

LIVING



O-DAY," I thought, "I will not plan nor strive;

Idle as yon blue sky, or clouds that go

Like loitering ships, with sails as white as snow,

I simply will be glad to be alive."

For, year by year, in steady summer glow The flowers had bloomed, and life had stored its hive,

But tasted not the honey. Quite to thrive, The flavor of my thrift I now would know.

But the good breeze blew in a friend — a boon

At any hour. There was a book to show, A gift to take, a slender one to give.

Living

The morning passed to mellow afternoon, And that to twilight; it was sleep-time soon, —

And lo ! again I had forgot to live.

EVEN THERE



TROOP, of babes in Summer-Land,

At heaven's gate — the children's gate :

One lifts the latch with rosy hand, Then turns and, dimpling, asks her mate, —

"What was the last thing that you saw?" "I lay and watched the dawn begin, And suddenly, thro' the thatch of straw, A great, clear morning-star laughed in."

- "And you?" "A floating thistle-down, Against June sky and cloud - wings white."
- "And you?" "A falling blow, a frown It frights me yet; oh, clasp me tight!"

- "And you?" "A face thro' tears that smiled "---
 - The trembling lips could speak no more;
- The blue eyes swam ; the lonely child Was homesick even at heaven's door.

SUMMER RAIN



- SAID: "" Blue heaven" (Oh, it was beautiful !),
- "Send me a tent to shut me to myself:

I am all lonely for my soul, that wanders

- Weary, bewildered, beckoned by thy depths;
- Thy white, round clouds, great bubbles of creamy snow ;
- Thy luscious sunshine, like some ripe, gold fruit ;
- Thy songs of birds, and wind warm with the flowers."

And there swept down (Oh, it was beautiful !)

A tent of silver rain, that fell like a veil Shutting me in to think all quiet thoughts, And feel the vibrant thrill of shadowy wings Summer Rain

Though with no syllable of earthly music, A voice of melody unutterable.

A RESTING-PLACE



SEA of shade; with hollow heights above,

Where floats the redwood's airy roof away,

Whose feathery lace the drowsy breezes move,

And softly through the azure windows play :

No nearer stir than yon white cloud astray,

No closer sound than sob of distant dove.

I only live as the deep forest's swoon Dreams me amid its dream; for all things fade,

Nor pulse of mine disturbs the unconscious noon.

Even love and hope are still — albeit they made

A Resting-Place

- My heart beat yesterday in slumber laid,
- Like yon dim ghost that last night was the moon.
- Only the bending grass, grown gray and sear,

Nods now and then, where at my feet it swings,

Pleased that another like itself is here,

Unseen among the mighty forest things —

Another fruitless life, that fading clings To earth and autumn days in doubt and fear.

Dream on, O wood! O wind, stay in thy west,

Nor wake the shadowy spirit of the fern,

Asleep along the fallen pine-tree's breast ! That, till the sun go down, and nightstars burn,

84 A Resting-Place

And the chill dawn-breath from the sea return,

Tired earth may taste heaven's honey-dew of rest.

A MEMORY



PON the barren, lonely hill We sat to watch the sinking sun;

Below, the land grew dim and still,

Whose evening shadow had begun. Her finger parted the shut book, —

At Aylmer's Field the leaf was turned, — Round her meek head and sainted look

The sunset like a halo burned. She knew not that I watched her face —

Her spirit through her eyes was gone To some far-off and Sabbath place,

And left me gazing there alone. Could she have known, that quiet hour,

What ghosts her presence raised in me, What graves were opened by the power

Of that unconscious witchery, She would not thus have sat and seen

The bird that balanced far below

On the blue air, and watched the sheen
Along his broad wings come and go.
For was she not another's bride ?
And I — what right had I to feast
Upon those eyes in revery wide,
With hungering gaze like famished
beast?
Was it before my fate I knelt —
The human fate, the mighty law-
To hunger for the heart I felt,
And love the lovely face I saw?
Or was it only that the brow,
Or some sweet trick of hand or tone,
Brought from the Past to haunt me now
Her ghost whose love was mine alone?
I know not; but we went to rest
That eve, from songs that haunt me
still,
And all night long, in visions blest,
I walked with angels on the hill.
a manea with angels on the fill.

86

THE OPEN WINDOW



Y tower was grimly builded, With many a bolt and bar, "And here," I thought, "I will keep my life

From the bitter world afar."

Dark and chill was the stony floor, Where never a sunbeam lay, And the mould crept up on the dreary wall, With its ghost touch, day by day.

One morn, in my sullen musings, A flutter and cry I heard ; And close at the rusty casement There clung a frightened bird.

Then back I flung the shutter That was never before undone, 87

The Open Window

And I kept till its wings were rested The little weary one.

But in through the open window, Which I had forgot to close, There had burst a gush of sunshine And a summer scent of rose.

For all the while I had burrowedThere in my dingy tower,Lo ! the birds had sung and the leaveshad dancedFrom hour to sunny hour.

And such balm and warmth and beauty Came drifting in since then, That the window still stands open And shall never be shut again.

ON A PICTURE OF MT. SHASTA BY KEITH



WO craggy slopes, sheer down on either hand,

Fall to a cleft, dark and confused with pines.

Out of their sombre shade — one gleam of light —

Escaping toward us like a hurrying child,

- Half laughing, half afraid, a white brook runs.
- The fancy tracks it back thro' the thick gloom
- Of crowded trees, immense, mysterious

As monoliths of some colossal temple,

- Dusky with incense, chill with endless time:
- Thro' their dim arches chants the distant wind,

Hollow and vast, and ancient oracles Whisper, and wait to be interpreted.

90 On a Picture of Mt. Shasta

Far up the gorge denser and darker grows The forest; columns lie with writhen roots

in air,

- And across open glades the sunbeams slant
- To touch the vanishing wing-tips of shy birds;
- Till from a mist-rolled valley soar the slopes,
- Blue-hazy, dense with pines to the verge of snow,

Up into cloud. Suddenly parts the cloud,

And lo! in heaven — as pure as very snow,

Uplifted like a solitary world -

- A star, grown all at once distinct and clear —
- The white earth-spirit, Shasta ! Calm, alone,

Silent it stands, cold in the crystal air,

White-bosomed sister of the stainless dawn,

With whom the cloud holds converse, and the storm

On a Picture of Mt. Shasta 91

Rests there, and stills its tempest into snow.

Once — you remember ? — we beheld that vision,

But busy days recalled us, and the whole

Fades now among my memories like a dream.

The distant thing is all incredible,

And the dim past as if it had not been.

Our world flees from us; only the one point,

The unsubstantial moment, is our own.

- We are but as the dead, save that swift mote
- Of conscious life. Then the great artist comes,
- Commands the chariot wheels of Time to stay,

Summons the distant, as by some austere Grand gesture of a mighty sorcerer's wand, And our whole world again becomes our own.

So we escape the petty tyranny

92 On a Picture of Mt. Shasta

Of the incessant hour; pure thought evades

Its customary bondage, and the mind Is lifted up, watching the moon-like globe.

How should a man be eager or perturbed Within this calm ? How should he greatly

care

For reparation, or redress of wrong, -

To scotch the liar, or spurn the fawning knave,

Or heed the babble of the ignoble crew? Seest thou yon blur far up the icy slope,

- Like a man's footprint? Half thy little town
- Might hide there, or be buried in what seems

From yonder cliff a curl of feathery snow. Still the far peak would keep its frozen calm,

Still at the evening on its pinnacle

Would the one tender touch of sunset dwell,

And o'er it nightlong wheel the silent stars.

On a Picture of Mt. Shasta 93

- So the great globe rounds on, --- mountains, and vales,
- Forests, waste stretches of gaunt rock and sand,
- Shore, and the swaying ocean, league on league;
- And blossoms open, and are sealed in frost;
- And babes are born, and men are laid to rest.
- What is this breathing atom, that his brain
- Should build or purpose aught or aught desire,

But stand a moment in amaze and awe, Rapt on the wonderfulness of the world?

THE TREE OF MY LIFE



HEN I was yet but a child, the gardener gave me a tree,

A little slim elm, to be set wherever seemed good to me.

What a wonderful thing it seemed ! with its lace-edge leaves uncurled,

- And its span-long stem, that should grow to the grandest tree in the world.
- So I searched all the garden round, and out over field and hill,
- But not a spot could I find that suited my wayward will.
- I would have it bowered in the grove, in a close and quiet vale;
- I would rear it aloft on the height, to wrestle with the gale.
- Then I said, "I will cover its roots with a little earth by the door,

The Tree of my Life 95

And there it shall live and wait, while I search for a place once more.

- But still I could never find it, the place for my wondrous tree,
- And it waited and grew by the door, while years passed over me.
- Till suddenly, one fine day, I saw it was grown too tall,
- And its roots gone down too deep, to be ever moved at all.
- So here it is growing still, by the lowly cottage door;
- Never so grand and tall as I dreamed it would be of yore,
- But it shelters a tired old man in its sunshine-dappled shade,
- The children's pattering feet round its knotty knees have played,
- Dear singing birds in a storm sometimes take refuge there,
- And the stars through its silent boughs shine gloriously fair.

A CHILD AND A STAR



HE star, so pure in saintly white, Deep in the solemn soul of night, With dreams of deathless beauty wed,

And golden ways that seraphs tread : The child — so mere a thing of earth, So meek a flower of mortal birth : A far-off lucent world, so bright, Stooping to touch with tender light That little gown at evening prayer : It seems a condescension rare, — Heaven round a common child to glow ! Ah ! wiser eyes of angels know The star, a toy but roughly wrought ; The child, God's own most loving thought. Yon evening planet, wan with moons, Colossal, 'mid its dim, swift noons, — What is it but a bulk of stone, Like this gray globe we dwell upon ?

A Child and a Star

Down hollow spaces, sightless, chill, Its vibrant beams in darkness thrill, Till thro' some window drift the rays Where a pure heart looks up and prays; And in that silent worshipper, The waves of feeling stir and stir, And spread in wider rings above, To tremble at God's heart of love. Tho' it be kingliest one of all His worlds, 't is but a stony ball : What are they all, from sun to sun, But dust and stubble, when all's done ? Some heavenly grace it only caught, When, like a hint from home, it brought To a child's heart one tender thought: Itself in that great mystery lost, As some bright pebble, idly tost Into the darkling sea at night, Whose widening ripples, running light, Go out into the infinite.

AT DAWN



LAY awake and listened, ere the light

Began to whiten at the window pane.

The world was all asleep: earth was a fane

Emptied of worshippers; its dome of night, Its silent aisles, were awful in their gloom. Suddenly from the tower the bell struck four,

Solemn and slow, how slow and solemn ! o'er

Those death-like slumberers, each within his room.

The last reverberation pulsed so long

It seemed no tone of earthly mould at all. But the bell woke a thrush; and with a

call

He roused his mate, then poured a tide of song :

- "Morning is coming, fresh, and clear, and blue,"
- Said that bright song ; and then I thought of you.

AN ADAGE FROM THE ORIENT



T the punch-bowl's brink, Let the thirsty think What they say in Japan:

"First the man takes a drink, Then the drink takes a drink, Then the drink takes the man!" 100

A PARADOX



ASTE, haste, O laggard !— leave thy drowsy dreams ; Cram all thy brain with know-

ledge — clutch and cram !

The earth is wide, the universe is vast : Thou hast infinity to learn. Oh, haste !

Haste not, haste not, my soul! "Infinity!"

Thou hast eternity to learn it in.

- Thy boundless lesson through the endless vears
- Hath boundless leisure. Run not like a slave —

Sit like a king, and see the ranks of worlds Wheel in their cycles onward to thy feet.

101

THE PHILOSOPHER



IS wheel of logic whirled and spun all day;

All day he held his system, grinding it

Finer and finer, till 't was fined away.

- But the chance sparks of sense and mother-wit,
- Flung out as that wheel-logic spun and whirled,
- Kindled the nations, and lit up the world.

102

A BIRD'S SONG



HE shadow of a bird On the shadow of a bough; Sweet and clear his song is

heard,

"Seek me now - I seek thee now."

The bird swings out of reach in the swaying tree,

But his shadow on the garden walk below belongs to me.

The phantom of my Love False dreams with hope doth fill, Softly singing far above, "Love me still — I love thee still!" The cruel vision hovers at my sad heart's door, But the soul love is searing out of reach

But the soul love is soaring out of reach for evermore.

103

THE DEAD PRESIDENT



ERE there no crowns on earth, No evergreen to weave a hero's

wreath,

That he must pass beyond the gates of death, Our hero, our slain hero, to be crowned? Could there on our unworthy earth be found Naught to befit his worth?

The noblest soul of all !

When was there ever, since our Washington,

- A man so pure, so wise, so patient one
- Who walked with this high goal alone in sight,

To speak, to do, to sanction only Right, Though very heaven should fall !

The Dead President 105

Ah, not for him we weep;

- What honor more could be in store for him?
- Who would have had him linger in our dim
- And troublesome world, when his great work was done —
- Who would not leave that worn and weary one

Gladly to go to sleep?

For us the stroke was just;

We were not worthy of that patient heart;

- We might have helped him more, not stood apart,
- And coldly criticised his works and ways —
- Too late now, all too late our little praise

Sounds hollow o'er his dust.

Be merciful, O our God ! Forgive the meanness of our human hearts,

106 The Dead President

That never, till a noble soul departs,

- See half the worth, or hear the angel's wings
- Till they go rustling heavenward as he springs

Up from the mounded sod.

Yet what a deathless crown

- Of Northern pine and Southern orangeflower,
- For victory, and the land's new bridalhour,
- Would we have wreathed for that beloved brow !
- Sadly upon his sleeping forehead now We lay our cypress down.

O martyred one, farewell ! Thou hast not left thy people quite alone, Out of thy beautiful life there comes a tone

Of power, of love, of trust, a prophecy, Whose fair fulfillment all the earth shall be, And all the Future tell.

ę

ROLAND



FOOLISH creature full of fears, He trembled for his fate, And stood aghast to feel the earth

Swing round her dizzy freight.

With timid foot he touched each plan, Sure that each plan would fail;Behemoth's tread was his, it seemed, And every bridge too frail.

No glory of the night or day Lit any crown for him, The tranquil past but breathed a mist To make the future dim.

The world, his birthright, seemed a cell, An iron heritage ; Man, a trapped creature, left to die Forgotten in his cage.

Roland

In every dark he held his breath, And warded off a blow; While at his shoulder still he sought Some tagging ghost of woe.

Spying the thorns but not the flowers, Through all the blossoming land He hugged his careful heart and shunned The path on either hand.

The buds that broke their hearts to give New odors to the air He saw not ; but he caught the scent Of dead leaves everywhere.

Till on a day he came to know He had not made the world; That if he slept, as when he ran, Each onward planet whirled.

He knew not where the vision fell, Only all things grew plain — As if some thatch broke through and let A sunbeam cross his brain.

Roland

In beauty flushed the morning light, With blessing dropped the rain, All creatures were to him most fair, Nor anything in vain.

He breathed the space that links the stars, He rested on God's arm — A man unmoved by accident,

Untouched by any harm.

The weary doubt if all is good, The doubt if all is ill, He left to Him who leaves to us To know that all is well.

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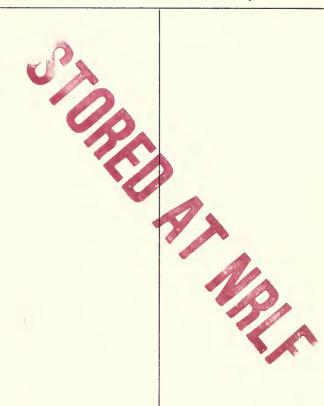
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